

ice Retirement System and the Railroad Retirement System deserve special consideration by the Congress. In addition, many of the provisions and concepts in this Act have been previously proposed by this Administration and have broad bipartisan support.

American workers deserve pension security—as well as a decent wage, lifelong access to high quality education and training, and health security—to take advantage of the opportunities of our growing economy.

I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this legislative proposal by the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 23, 1996.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on
the Central African Republic**

May 23, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On May 19, 1996, heavy fighting broke out between government forces and mutinous troops in the capital city of Bangui, Central African Republic. Early reports suggested that some 200–500 renegade soldiers were firing weapons, including rockets and artillery, and that they had called for troops from outside the capital to join them in the mutiny. During the fighting, prison guards reportedly abandoned their posts and prisoners were observed loitering around the prison. Although neither the American Embassy nor American citizens have been directly targeted, heavy fighting has been reported around the American Embassy, which has sustained some damage from stray rounds. At one point, government forces indicated an intention to assault a rebel stronghold very near the Embassy, but were dissuaded by the Ambassador.

On May 20, due to the rapidly deteriorating security situation and the resultant threat to American citizens and the Embassy, I ordered the deployment of U.S. military personnel to provide enhanced security for the American Embassy in Bangui and to conduct the evacuation from the Central African Re-

public of private U.S. citizens and certain U.S. Government employees. Approximately 32 U.S. Marines entered the capital city in the early morning hours on May 21 and immediately took up positions in and around the American Embassy compound. They also deployed to the international airport in order to assist in processing evacuees and act as liaison with French military forces already positioned there. Evacuation operations began later that day, involving a U.S. KC-130 cargo aircraft operating into Yaounde, Cameroon. Further evacuation flights are planned. Additional U.S. forces may also be deployed in order to provide a means of safe passage for evacuees to the airport and to provide additional security at the American Embassy if required.

The marines involved in this operation are from the Marine Expeditionary Unit currently operating off Liberia. Although U.S. forces are equipped and prepared to defend American lives and property, I do not anticipate that they will become involved in hostilities. U.S. forces will redeploy as soon as evacuation operations are complete and enhanced security at the American Embassy is no longer required.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action to protect American citizens and the American Embassy in Bangui.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 23, 1996.

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Proclamation 6901—Prayer for Peace, Memorial Day, 1996

May 24, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On the last Monday of May each year, our Nation takes time to remember those who have given their lives to safeguard America's freedom. Courageous and loyal citizens have died on battlefields around the world in defense of the United States, our interests, and our values, thus ensuring more than two centuries of independence and a society based on individual rights. Their selflessness demands our profound gratitude and calls us to consider anew the awesome price of liberty.

On this special day, let us reflect upon the supreme sacrifice made by our fellow citizens lost in battle. All were proud members of our national community, and all perished while protecting our country's honor and the American way of life. Let us share in the grief of the families whose loved ones remain unaccounted for or fell while defending this great Nation. And let us pray, each in our own way, for peace throughout this land and across the globe. As beneficiaries of the freedoms our troops secured, we can best pay tribute to their deeds by leaving to future generations an America that continues to be a beacon of justice and freedom for people everywhere.

In respect and recognition of the courageous men and women to whom we pay tribute, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on May 11, 1950 (64 Stat. 158), has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the American people might unite in prayer.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 27, 1996, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11:00 a.m. of that day as a time to join in prayer. I urge the press, radio, tele-

vision, and all other information media to take part in this observance.

I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff during this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control, and I request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 28, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 29.

Executive Order 13007—Indian Sacred Sites

May 24, 1996

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, in furtherance of Federal treaties, and in order to protect and preserve Indian religious practices, it is hereby ordered:

Section 1. Accommodation of Sacred Sites. (a) In managing Federal lands, each executive branch agency with statutory or administrative responsibility for the management of Federal lands shall, to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions, (1) accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and (2) avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Where appropriate, agencies shall maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites.

(b) For purposes of this order:

(i) "Federal lands" means any land or interests in land owned by the United States,